DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 344 248 CS 507 763

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TITLE A Pedagogical Treatment of King's "I Have a Dream" Speech: Toward Incorporating Orality in Rhetorical Criticism.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 47p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audience Response; Discourse Analysis; Higher Education; Metaphors; *Persuasive Discourse; *Rhetorical Criticism; Rhetorical Theory; *Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS *King (Martin Luther Jr); *Orality; Rhetorical Strategies

ABSTRACT

This paper first discusses the ways in which Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech demonstrates some of the fundamental principles that should be used to teach rhetorical criticism, and then offers a microscopic, intrinsic criticism of the speech. The paper's four sections (1) review the nature of written speech texts; (2) discuss an alternative emphasis on orality in criticism and the limitations of such an alternative; (3) focus on the worthiness of discourse for study and review previous studies of the discourse; and (4) examine the speech's intrinsic organization and unifying elements such as metaphors, transitions, and the rhythm of King's delivery. Fourteen notes are included; 32 references are attached. (SR)

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A Pedagogical Treatment of King's "I Have a Dream" Speech: Toward Incorporating Orality in Rhetorical Criticism

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Running Head: PEDAGOGICAL TREATMENT--"I HAVE A DREAM"

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A Pedagogical Treatment of King's "I Have a Dream" Speech: Toward Incorporating Orality in Rhetorical Criticism

Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech is widely heralded as an outstanding one, and it offers an extraordinary opportunity to demonstrate excellence in rhetorical discourse and to teach some of the fundamental principles of rhetorical criticism. However, previous research has not exploited these opportunities, and doing so is a fundamental function of rhetorical studies. As Brummett maintained, scholars should "think of rhetorical theory and criticism's audience as properly and primarily our students [emphasis in the original]" (p. 103).

The present treatment is an intensively detailed highlighting of some of the ways in which King's speech demonstrates some fundamental principles of criticism: 1) the nature of written speech texts; 2) an alternative emphasis on orality in criticism and the limitations of such an alternative; 3) focusing on the worthiness of discourse for study and utilizing previous studies of the discourse; and 4) the speech's intrinsic organization and unifying elements such as metaphors, the speech's transitions, and the rhythm of King's delivery.

The Construction of Written Speech Texts

The form of the transcript of a speech may influence the act of criticism, so it is helpful to consider how speech texts have usually been developed. One consideration relates to the guidelines employed by an editor of a speech text. Anthologized

texts are usually taken from those published in a variety of sources such as newspapers, historical archives, etc. In many cases, the person who constructs the text for printing (the editor) is not the rhetor; thus, the grammatical structure of sentences in the text probably governs editorial decisions regarding "lines" of the text, and paragraphs are probably structured on the basis of emphasizing units of ideas that seem to fit together. These structures thus probably represent the "idea units" of the editor who is reviewing a transcript, not those significant to the rhetorical process or those employed in the preparation of the speech by the rhetor or, perhaps, the idea units of the audience. In this sense the lines of the text are arbitrary.

A second consideration regarding the speech text relates to the "idea units" of the critic, who sometimes unconsciously adopts the "arbitrary" decisions of the editor. For example, because it was not highlighted by paragraphing, the critic may overlook a concept or rhetorical tactic that may have been important in the rhetorical process. Or in some cases the rhetor or his/her speechwriter may deliberately structure an idea verbally in order to obfuscate it, and the editor may not note the significance of this tactic. These subtleties, in turn, may be overlooked, in particular, by novice student critics. Further, novices may assume that the paragraphing of a text reflects the organizational pattern in the speech.

The written text of King's "Dream" speech is a particularly interesting one because, it has been widely reprinted. It would seem that audio and video recordings make it possible for students of relatively recent speeches to be assured of the accuracy of written texts, however such assurances are not always warranted. As Bosmajian (1982) has meticulously noted, different written versions of King's speech have often distorted the accuracy of the text of the speech as it was orally presented. Thus, the student of the speech is plagued by more than the problems of "arbitrary" editing outlined above--some written texts are simply inaccurate. Further, apparently one cannot always be assured of the accuracy of recordings of speeches. Bosmajian (1982) noted that he used two commercially distributed audio recordings in his study of King's "Dream" speech, and two sentences had been edited out of one of the recordings.

An Alternative to the Emphasis on Written Texts: Equal Emphasis on the Orality of the Speech

While the development of available speech texts has often been somewhat arbitrary--and sometimes inaccurate--an awareness of orality of the speech may guide the critic to develop an accurate written manuscript. While the task of developing such a text is not always a simple one, it can carry distinct advantages. As demonstrated by recent research of King's "Dream" speech, the availability of audio recordings allows the student of the speech to be aware of audience responsiveness to the

speech, and this awareness may lend a richer insight into the rhetorical process.

Two recent studies of King's speech are particularly notable because they deliberately incorporated the orality of the speech act in developing transcripts. Keith and Whittenberger-Keith (1988/89) emphasized orality by focusing on the speech as a conversation analytic approach to public address. They conceptualized their study in terms of an orator's "call" for an audience response in terms of applause or verbal response. The authors also provided a conversation analytic transcript of the speech from an audiotape that "was apparently made via the microphone into which King was speaking" (p. 121). The transcript indicates audience responses.

Alvarez (1988) also emphasized the concept of orality, arguing that consideration of a speech in prose form is "inaccurate:" "the printed version of the speech is divided into paragraphs, which intend to correspond to 'idea units.' The unit of language is therefore the sentence" (p. 338). In the case of King's speech, consideration must be given to the oral nature of the speech, Alvarez maintained, because it is a form of "oral poetry."[1] Indeed, she argued that in one sense "the translation of this oral text into a written prose form conveys also a misinterpretation of its structure" [emphasis added] (p. 339).

Alvarez transcribed King's speech from an unidentified audiotape and further emphasized the importance of orality: she maintained that the speech has the form of a Baptist sermon in the Black tradition of the United States, which calls for overt participation by the audience.[2] As such, her transcription includes audience responses, which, she suggested, are a product of King's falling and rising vocal intonations.

Thus, this recent research on King's speech has suggested a greater emphasis on the concept of orality than many rhetorical studies have employed. In both cases, the authors have incorporated the rhetor's oral behavior in developing a transcript of the speech, and the content of the transcript has included audience responses.

Cox (1989, p. 194) noted another instance of the audience's role in King's speech. Describing a dramatic refrain of the speech, "now is the time," he reported that "Coretta Scott King recalled 'When he got to the rhythmic part of demanding freedom now . . . the crowd caught the timing and shouted now in a cadence.'"[3]

These studies of King's speech are not the only ones that have emphasized the role of the audience in the rhetorical act. For example, audience responses were also of central importance in another recent study by Meyer (1990), who considered it essential to focus on reactions to Ronald Reagan's use of humor

in speeches. As such, Meyer elected to employ audio and videotapes in his analysis.

It appears evident that emphasizing the orality of a speech can enrich the student's insight into the rhetorical process, but there are limitations to the advantages in such an emphasis.

The Limitations of Emphasis on the Orality of the Speech

Even when an audiotape of a speech exists, one cannot always assume that a written text allegedly developed with the incorporation of orality provides an infallibly accurate text, as the King speech demonstrates. For example, comparison of the two King transcripts discussed above revealed many discrepancies regarding audience responses. Further, a videotape of the speech can serve as a third version of the speech, and a comparison of audience responses evident in one videotape reveals still other differences.[4] However, all of these versions may be accurate if microphones were in different locations. Thus, this case study of orality serves to demonstrate the complexities of making assumptions about what different segments of a large audience may hear.

The texts of the King speech discussed here also demonstrate some of the other difficulties that may arise in utilizing a text that has already incorporated orality. Neither the Alvarez nor the Keith & Whittenberger-Keith texts may be entirely satisfactory for the student of criticism. There are some

inaccuracies evident in the former, and the latter may be confusing for some students of the speech. The Alvarez version has a few minor discrepancies with the videotape of the speech, primarily in King's use of conjunctions in the speech; however, the Keith & Whittenberger-Keith text accurately reflects use of conjunctions evident in the videotape. But the Alvarez version also fails to include three full sentences evident in the videotape, and confirmation of the omissions is evident by comparing the analysis by Bosmajian (1982), and other text versions, such as those published in the Dallas Morning News (1988) and in the Ryan textbook (1987).

Some students of the speech may also find the Keith & Whittenberger-Keith text unsatisfactory. For example, they may be unfamiliar with the complex conventions of conversational analysis transcripts. In addition, the transcript might be visually distracting to the critic. For example, the first words in some sentences are not capitalized in the King transcript. Further, the authors discussed some of the critical assumptions employed in producing the transcript, and these decisions might differ from those of a rhetorical critic: for example, the authors noted that "a transcript that orders line breaks on the basis of audience responses will fail to convey the powerful sense of King's rhythmic progression that is so evident in the speech" (p. 122).

Lastly, a case study of the King speech demonstrates that despite the benefits of incorporating orality, it may fail to offer insight into some matters of interest to critics. One might anticipate that if orality lends insight to the critic, such insight would be increased by the addition of another dimension--the visual dimension. Thus, a videotape of a speech would provide the critic with the advantages of orality and visuality. However, despite the availability of a videotape of King's speech, the exact nature of the most familiar portion of the speech, the "I Have a Dream" sequence, apparently remains a fascinating, unresolved mystery.

Most observers apparently concede that the Dream sequence was added in the midst of King's presentation of his prepared text. For example, Cox (1989) maintained that the "famous refrain . . . was quite spontaneously added by King as he arrived at his peroration" (p. 199). However, Cox's observation leaves it unclear whether the recorded words represent supplements to King's prepared text or whether they replaced his prepared text or to what extent they did both. King's biographers have provided a number of versions of the how the dream sequence evolved.

Garrow (1986) cited his private interview with King, which took place three months after the speech, asserting that King "dispensed with the prepared text and went on extemporaneously" with "'that thing about'" (King's words) the dream (p. 283).

Thus, Garrow has suggested that some unspecified portion of this section of the speech replaced the prepared text, but it remains unclear exactly at what point the replacement version began and ended.

The matter of spontaneous replacement during the speech is not of trivial importance. Another biographer, Lewis (1978), explained that the speech was carefully prepared and included some version of the dream sequence:

> The speech that Martin was about to give had been more carefully prepared than any he had made before, more worried over by paragraph, line, and comma than [a particular, previous] . . . speech. During the previous two days and even late into the last night, he had written and rewritten his text. . . . Ed Clayton, the SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] public relations agent in the Atlanta office and frequently a polisher of Martin's speeches, spent hours with [King]. . . . Revision continued on the plane to Washington. He [King] kept the refrain from . . . [an earlier speech]: "I Have a Dream" (p. 227).

Branch (1988, p. 875), another biographer, also emphasized that the speech was carefully crafted, however, he maintained that King "began to outline his speech for the next day" after his arrival in Washington. Branch indicated that King and all the other speakers at the march had been notified "that a hook-man would unceremoniously yank them from the podium if their

speeches exceeded seven minutes" (p. 873). However, Branch asserted that the dream sequence, from its very beginning, came forth from King as an almost-complete departure from the prepared text: Branch claimed that toward the end of the sequence King "spoke a few sentences from the prepared conclusion, but within seconds he was off again. . . ." (p. 882).

Another version of the evolution of the dream sequence by a reporter for the Dallas Morning News (Kruh, 1988, p. 8F) suggests that King may have tentatively planned to use it but that it was not a part of his manuscript.

> On the eve of the Washington speech, King and staff members worked late into the night on the final text. He was acutely aware that the speakers had each been allotted just 10 minutes, [Keith] Miller [an English professor at Arizona State University] says. In fact, the text that King submitted before the march--a requirement of all speakers--did not include the "I have a dream" portion. . . . Lewis [the biographer cited above] believes King took the podium with the intention of concluding with "I have a dream" if audience reaction warranted it.

Thus, it is noteworthy that there is even disagreement in some reports about the prescribed maximum length of the prepared speeches, seven or ten minutes.

Curiosity about the spontaneity of the dream sequence is raised further with regard to the transition to the sequence,

which is almost too simple. King said, in essence, "I say to you today my friends." Did this master of rhetorical technique, as evidenced throughout the speech and his career, plan such an unremarkable transition to the speech climax, when other transitions in the speech seem carefully crafted? And would he plan a grammatically awkward sentence, underlined as follows for emphasis, including an inelegant, redundant use of the word "today" in the same sentence? King said, "I say to you **today** my friends so even though we face the difficulties of **today** and tomorrow I still have a dream."[5]

The videotape, unfortunately, fails to lend much insight into the questions raised here, as King is shown using the prepared manuscript for much of the speech, and there seems little that is distinctive about his use of the manuscript during the dream sequence.

Students of the speech await resolution of the mystery surrounding the spontaneity of this crucial portion of the speech. But such resolution may not be possible, as Kruh (1988) reported that "no one knows exactly what notes were in his hands as he spoke; they have since been lost" (p. 8F).

Thus, while there are clear advantages in emphasizing the orality of a speech in the critical process, there are clear limitations of the approach. Even the existence of audio and video recordings does not afford the critic full insight into the

rhetorical act.

Focusing on Discourse Worthy of Study and Reviewing Previous Studies of the Discourse

In the process of learning about rhetorical criticism, students are sometimes asked to select a piece of discourse that they will study as individuals, but the selection process is sometimes a very difficult one for them. It would be ideal if they were able to select discourse that would enhance their understanding of rhetorical communication theory, but this goal may be an unreasonable expectation of novice critics.

It is beyond the limitations of the present treatment to review the criteria for, and the process of, selecting a piece of discourse worthy of study, but it is clear that some pieces of discourse are more worthy of study than others, and every piece of discourse is probably not inherently worthy of critical study.

One natural tendency is for the student to select a "famous" speech for individualized study. King's "Dream" speech is an excellent example of such a speech because it has been the subject of a good deal of public and scholarly attention. But it is also an excellent example of how a careful review of previous studies may suggest a critical focus that provides "new" insight into the rhetorical process.

The first task of the critic is to identify the reasons that a piece of discourse is worthy of study, and this task is intimately tied to a review of previous commentary about the

discourse. King's speech has been the subject of passionate plaudits as a great speech. For example, in his analysis of "The Decline of Eloquence" in the contemporary period of the United States (beginning approximately 1948), Baskerville (1979) identified the speech as one of two "of the most extraordinary single utterances of recent years" (p. 230). Cox (1989) praised the speech as "a moral compass in American political culture;" he also noted that King's biographers have called it "the rhetorical achievement of a lifetime" (p. 181) and have claimed that it "continues to 'live today as one of the most moving orations of our time'" (p. 182). Keith and Whittenberger-Keith (1988/89) called it "a paradigm of eloquence and effectiveness" (p. 115). Bosmajian (1982) summarized other appraisals of the speech:

> The speech has been described as the "most eloquent" of King's career; as an address which "carries its own drama, even on the printed page"; as a speech which expressed to the highest degree the spirit and the essence of demonstrations, so much so that it seems impossible to separate the march itself from the speech; as one of the "great speeches in American history" which future generations will read "for inspiration" (p. 107).

Based on these assessments, the speech is clearly worthy of study, and one might assume that many critics have exploited the opportunity for study of the speech. But review of previous studies reveals that there is ample opportunity for new insights

into the speech. King's speech is so rich with rhetorical implications that a fully comprehensive study of it is an unreasonable expectation.

Further, the critic's review of previous studies sometimes reveals that all studies are not readily available. There have been a number of unpublished, public presentations that have focused on the speech--Leff (1987), Williamson-Ige and Jackson (1987), Zarefsky (1987), Osborn (1989), and Wharton (1990)--but such studies are often not readily available. Even for the present analysis, for example, all of these could not be obtained. Other unpublished studies include two doctoral dissertations, and a review of Masters Abstracts International to the present reveals no thesis studies of the speech. Such materials are also, of course, often difficult to secure. Even if the critic is able to secure the dissertations, s/he might conclude that they have left a good deal of opportunity for additional critical treatment.

One unpublished dissertation by Smith (1964) included a "case study" of the Washington March in 1963 and the "I Have a Dream" speech; however, some would find the focus on the speech a disappointing resource because of its principally descriptive, classics-oriented, neo-Aristotelian critical posture. A second dissertation by Keele (1972) utilized a Burkeian framework to study King's career rhetorical strategies; as such, critical focus on individual instances of discourse, such as the "I Have a

Dream" speech, is limited. Another dissertation (Phillips, 1983), which may be a relevant analysis, was not available at the time of this writing.

There are several published rhetorical analyses of the speech. For example, Patton (1987) offered a brief preface to the text of the speech, and Bosmajian's (1982) study is primarily a review of the authenticity of printed versions of the speech. Hart's (1990) insights to the speech are helpful, but his is a textbook focus on only limited elements of the speech. Cox (1989) offered one of the most complete rhetorical studies of the speech, focusing on it as an artifact that "reconstitutes public time as urgent and struggles of civil rights activists as redemptive" (p. 183); Hariman's (1989) response took issue with several of Cox's arguments regarding King's response to the rhetorical situation that he faced.

Thus a critical review of previous studies indicates that most are not detailed studies of the elements intrinsic to the speech text that student critics may have before them. For example, even the readily available published studies by Cox (1989) and Hariman (1989) are as much concerned with some of the extrinsic, contextual elements as with the detailed intrinsic workings of the speech. While such studies are insightful in their focus on extrinsic elements, they necessarily neglect some of the detailed, subtle intrinsic intricacies within the speech. Some of these intrinsic elements have been the focus of the

studies by Alvarez (1988) and Keith and Whittenberger-Keith (1988/89), but their analyses are far from comprehensive; neither, for example, mentions the concept of archetypal metaphors that permeate the speech.

In sum, King's speech is an excellent example of a very famous speech that has been the subject of a good deal of study, but in terms of readily available resources there has not been a great effort to examine the elements intrinsic to the speech text, which contributed to having made it "famous." Thus, the student of criticism may learn that a very careful review of previous studies of a very "famous" speech reveals an opportunity for "new" insight into a piece of discourse.

There are, of course, many approaches that a student could employ in analysis of a piece of discourse, but one of the most obvious is to employ his/her previous understandings of the intrinsic workings of a speech. Thus, it is appropriate to review the nature of intrinsically-focused criticism.

The Nature of Intrinsic Analysis

Gronbeck (1975) suggested a very fundamental conception of an intrinsic examination: "any analysis which finds most of its confirming materials <u>inside a rhetorical artifact</u>" [emphasis in the original] (p. 314).[6] However, an intrinsic analysis might also be conceptualized in a more complex way. In discussing methodologies that are primarily intrinsic and extrinsic, Redding

(1968), in a slightly different context, explained that an intrinsic analysis "deals directly with what a communicator actually emits--not with what he [or she] intends to say, . . . or with what a specified audience thinks he [or she] said" (p. 113).[4] Thus, an intrinsic analysis of King's speech, like Stelzner's (1966) study of Roosevelt's "War Message," does "not suggest that [the speaker] . . . consciously [emphasis added] structured [all of] the relationships we explore and evaluate" (p. 421). Indeed, the discussion above raised the matter of the conscious planning of the best-known portion of King's speech, the "Dream" sequence.

The treatment of the "Dream" speech study that follows is most closely analogous to the study by Stelzner (1966), which is a microcosmic, microscopic focus on the speech text. Perhaps because of its tedious nature, Stelzner's methodology has not been widely employed, but it is particularly applicable for the "Dream" speech, the richness of which exists in the internal workings of the text. The present treatment is not an exact replica of Stelzner's, in part because of the differences in the lengths of the speeches studied: whereas Roosevelt's speech contains approximately 500 words, the King speech contains more than 1700. Like Stelzner's study, however, the following treatment was originally developed with a line-by-line focus; its presentation, here, however, has been adapted as more of a

pedagogical tool than a data report.

As discussed above, the student interested in an intrinsic analysis of a speech needs to develop an accurate written transcript, and for relatively recent speeches, one means for doing so is to verify a previously-existing transcript with an audio or video recording. In the present study, an improved version of the Alvarez (1988) text was made suitable by adding the omitted sentences described earlier, and the videotape of the speech served as a data base, as well.

The improved version of the Alvarez text has advantages. It employs "lines," not sentences, as the units of division, and these lines are based on consideration of pauses by King and his rising or falling vocal intonation at the end of these lines. Thus, instead of visually focusing on full sentences as thought units, the reader focuses on the lines. However, focus on sentences is not excluded in studying the transcript, as punctuation maintains the integrity of the sentences.

Sentence units are frequently used in the following discussion of the speech, and the decision to use these units has two advantages. First, while one might find a "lines" transcript useful for <u>conducting</u> an analysis, most <u>discussions</u> of speeches employ sentence units; thus, reading sentence units is simpler. Second, most texts of the King speech use sentence units; thus, the reader does not need an improved version of the Alvarez transcript to study the speech.

The following analysis attempts to work toward a comprehensive intrinsic reading of the speech, which attempts to maximize the benefits of previous published and unpublished research. The first section can be considerd a "running commentary" on the manner in which the speech is developed for the audience. Thus, it can be used by students as a set of "marginal notes," albeit it a bit labor-intensive, for a line-by-line reading of King's speech, which reveals the unifying elements of the speech.

Some Intrinsic Elements of King's "Dream" Speech

The Speech's Organization and Unifying Elements

In its most basic form, King's speech employs a very fundamental chronological organizational pattern: past, present, and future. However, a careful line-by-line reading of the text reveals an unmistakable, parallel, consonant, unifying element that appears and reappears throughout these sections of the speech, which functions to tie the sections together. The unifying element is a complex set of closely related metaphors. The most encompassing of these is the light/dark metaphor, which is archetypal. But a variation of this element is another metaphor referred to herein as a confinement/movement metaphor. Within the discussion below it seems clear that the confinement/movement metaphor is linked to the light/dark metaphor. Further, the confinement/movement metaphors display a clear directional element--upward and downward, and backward and

forward--which sometimes permeate the instances of the light/dark archetypal metaphors.

The following discussion employs the speech's organizational pattern while highlighting the metaphors. However, some key portions of the speech are temporarily skipped over in the discussion in order to demonstrate the consistent existence of the metaphors that unify the sections of the speech. Within the overlooked sections are other strategies and tactics, some of which will be highlighted below. One rhetorical tactic that permeates the following discussion is King's use of refrain, not only because it appears so often in the speech but also because it serves an important function in the speech; as Alvarez (1988, p. 340) noted, refrain is a characteristic of the Black Baptist sermon tradition, and, throughout the speech, it contributes to the rhythm of King's delivery.

The Past

The first sentence of the speech begins with overt references to the past, and it is probably not inadvertent that King chose to employ the word "history" twice in the first sentence: "I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration, for freedom, in the history of our nation."

The second sentence acknowledges the centennial year of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and Cox (p. 190) noted King's attention to the Lincoln legacy in structuring the

opening in a way that replicates the Lincoln's Gettysburg address with parallelism:

> Lincoln said, "**Four score and seven years** ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation."
>
> King said, "**Five score years ago** a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation."

This opening section also employs the archetypal light/dark metaphors (Osborn, 1967) to dwell in the past, and the imagery proliferates the next few sentences. In the above sentence is a reference to the marchers standing in the "shadow" of the white Lincoln monument. Thus, black people have not achieved lightness even though (King says in the third sentence) the Emancipation Proclamation of the past served as a "beacon of light" and (in the fourth sentence) a "joyous daybreak" for "Negro slaves" "seared in the flames [light] of withering injustice." That is, the flames promised lightness, but the promise of justice withered and the slaves were merely seared. Zarefsky (1987) noted the irony of King's use, evident in this section, of metaphors to associate promises of light with blacks, "reversing the racial designations stereotypically summoned up by the[se] image[s]."

A second set of metaphors dealing with confinement follows immediately and accompanies the light/dark metaphors. The association is a logical one because the image of confinement can

include an image of darkness, which is the image of non-movement that permeates the speech. Whereas the Proclamation promised freedom (lightness) in the past, the promise has not been kept and an absence of freedom (darkness) remains.

In the fifth sentence King emphasizes that "the Negro is still not free," and (in the sixth sentence) s/he is "crippled by manacles" and "chains." Further, (in the seventh sentence) s/he is confined on an "island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity." Still further, (in the eighth sentence) the Negro is "languished in the corners of American society" and in "exile."

The Present

When the speech moves to a discussion of the present, metaphors intricately contribute to the overall structure of the speech. Osborn (1967) noted that there is a "vertical scale" that might be combined with light/dark archetypal metaphors "because of the natural association of light with the above and darkness with the below" (p. 120).[7] King's speech clearly demonstrates movement on this vertical scale. There is also a continuation of the confinement metaphor. Further, this section displays King's use of refrain (highlighted in bold).

> **This is no time** to engage in the luxury of cooling [the opposite of lightness] off [in darkness] or to take the tranquilizing [slow movement] drug of gradualism [slow

movement].

Now is the time to make real the promises of Democracy [reaching for a promise implies upward movement].

Now is the time to rise [upward] from the dark and desolate [forsaken] valley [of confinement] to the sunlit path.

Now is the time to lift [upward] our Nation from the [confining] quicksands . . . to the [contrasting] solid rock of brotherhood.

Now is the time to make justice a reality. . . .

The intricate use of metaphors continues through the next few sentences.

It would be fatal [confining] to overlook [and thus be confined by] the urgency of the moment [time, the present]. This sweltering [confining] summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating [freeing] autumn of freedom and equality.

This summer-to-autumn change of season metaphor represents a change to light, as Osborn (1967) noted (p. 124). King speaks of an "awakening," which does not mark a time when "the Negro [merely] needed to blow off steam [heat and white light] and will now be content [confined]."

The Future

More than ten minutes of the total sixteen minutes of the speech are devoted to the future,[8] and this heavy emphasis

suggests that hopefulness for future change is the main theme of the speech. These ten minutes include five minutes devoted to the "dream" sequence.

King's discussion continues the use of movement/confinement metaphors. The first two sentences are complex parallelisms.

> There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights.
>
> The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright of day of Justice emerges.

The dependent clauses of both sentences begin with "until," and this structure contributes to the rhythm of the speech. Also, his use of "bright" to describe a "day of justice" maintains the consistent use of light/dark metaphors. Further, the independent clauses of the two sentences use consistent kinetic (motion) metaphors (underlined above) that are converse: the first set represents inert energy, and the second is a juxtaposition set that represents energy in action.

After a brief departure from his consistent use of metaphors,[9] King continues his use of the metaphors with the vertical movement metaphor. Refrain (in bold below) also reappears as a rhetorical device.

> **We must** forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline.

> **We must** not allow our creative protest to degenerate [downward movement]. . . .
>
> **We must** rise to the majestic heights. . . .[10]
>
> The marvelous new militancy **must** not lead us to a distrust of . . . our white brothers . . . [who] have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. . . . and . . . their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

A variation on the movement metaphor is developed at this point in the speech, and this is a significant development. The variation was identified by Hart (1989, p. 223), but it is inescapable because the new forward movement metaphor permeates much of the remainder of the speech. Whereas an upward/downward vertical movement has been apparent earlier, forward/backward horizontal movement is apparent hereafter. King said:

> We cannot walk alone. And as we walk we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. . . . [despite] the fatigue of travel. . . .

As the speech continues, a new pattern of refrain (bold, and bold and underlined below), with an increased number of repetitions, is employed and accentuated by King's oral delivery of the lines, occasionally employing the movement metaphor (underlined, not bold below). Lucaites and Condit (1990, p. 16)

maintained that this section of the speech is notably forceful:

> **When will you [we] be satisfied?**
>
> **We can never be satisfied** as long as . . . [we] cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highway and the hotels of the cities.
>
> **We cannot be satisfied** as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one.
>
> **We can never be satisfied** as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood. . . .
>
> **We cannot be satisfied** as long as the Negro in Mississippi [one location on the horizontal movement scale] cannot vote and the Negro in New York [distantly removed on the horizontal scale] believes he has nothing for which to vote.
>
> **We are not satisfied** and **we will not be satisfied** until "Justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."[11]

The forward/backward movement-confinement metaphor gains force as King proceeds, and it is accentuated by refrain (bold and bold-underlined below, with metaphor components underlined but not bold).

> **Some of you have come here** out of great trials and tribulations.
>
> **Some of you have come here** from narrow jail cells.
>
> **Some of you have come here** from areas where your quest for

> freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality.

Intensity is added to the last sentence by parallel kinetic weather metaphors, "battered by the storms" and "staggered by the winds." In King's words, these sentences represent the actions of "veterans" of "creative suffering," which is "redemptive" and which needs to continue.[12]

King then employs the horizontal movement metaphor by dramatizing it with emphasis on backward movement, again accentuating through refrain (in bold).

> **Go back** to Mississippi, **go back** to Alabama, **go back** to South Carolina, **go back** to Georgia, **go back** to Louisiana, **go back** to the slums and ghettos of our Northern cities knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow [the downward metaphor] in the Valley of Despair [because we have already risen on the vertical plane to a new, higher plateau].

The famous dream sequence begins with the well known refrain: "I still have a dream. It is a dream," followed by four repetitions of "I have a dream that. . . ." and a crescendo of "I have a dream today." A variation of the refrain follows:

> I have a dream that. . . .
>
> I have a dream today. . . .
>
> I have a dream that. . . .

The speech continues the upward/downward and forward/backward movement metaphors: the dream of the future is "rooted," meaning that it is at a low-level but has the ability to rise vertically; "this nation will rise up and live out [that is, will continue to completion on the horizontal scale] the true meaning of its creed [the Declaration of Independence]"; "sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will sit down"; "in Alabama . . . with its governor, having his lips dripping" (downward, the past); "every valley [downward] shall be exalted" (moved upward)"; "the rough places [upward and downward movement on a vertical scale] will be made plain" (there will be forward movement); "the crooked places will be made straight" (for forward movement).[13]

King's use of metaphor, previously discrete, seems unleashed with passionate fury for his dream of the future in this portion of the speech. The fire metaphor, associated with lightness/darkness, reappears: "the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis [cooling] of Freedom and Justice."

Was it King's passion, perhaps spontaneous (as suggested earlier) that then led him to the unrestrained image of Alabama's governor "his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification?" King proclaims that in the same Alabama "little

black boys and black girls will be able to join hands [note the horizontal plane that is implied] with little white boys and white girls [the light-dark metaphor] as sisters and brothers" and that "my [King's] four little children will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."[14]

The use of refrain does not end with the dream sequence, and the movement metaphor does not end either. Movement and progress are no longer merely King's dream but now a reality for all those participating in the march: "This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back [movement] to the South with," and the "with this faith" phrase is repeated three times.

In his passionate crescendo for the future, refrain increases with a "let freedom ring" phrase used eleven times. Osborn (1989) called this an "astonishing movement in which King commands [emphasis in the original] his dream into reality." Further, the freedom ring is geographically dispersed, on a forward/backward scale, among the vertical heights throughout all sections of the country, and this is achieved artistically by King with images of: "the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire," "the mighty mountains of New York," "the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania," "the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado," "the curvaceous slopes of California," "Stone Mountain of Georgia," "Lookout Mountain of Tennessee," "every hill and molehill of

Mississippi," "from every mountainside." And as though the horizontal scale is not yet encompassing enough, he adds "every village and every hamlet from every state and every city." The horizontal plane is then coupled with the vertical plane: "And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring" King says, "we will be able to speed [movement] up [the vertical plane]" freedom.

In sum, it should be apparent that an intricately woven fabric of metaphors proliferates throughout the speech. Indeed, the above discussion has reviewed fully two-thirds of the entire speech; that is, interspersed portions of the total speech, which are not encompassed by the pattern of light/dark and confinement/movement metaphors, comprise a total of only approximately one-third of the entire speech.

Other Metaphors

While the speech demonstrates dominance of master metaphors that unify its entirety, it also demonstrates a mastery of other internally consistent metaphors. The most prominent of these is King's use of the bad check metaphor, to which he devotes two minutes of the total sixteen minutes of the speech. Within this section he places emphasis on "a promissory note," an American "heir," a "promise" to "all men," "guaranteed rights," a "defaulted" promise, an "obligation," a check marked "insufficient funds," "insufficient funds in the vaults of opportunity," the "Bank of Justice" being "bankrupt," "vaults of

opportunity," "riches of freedom," and "security of justice."

Another instance appears in his discussion of the future, wherein King uses refrain of the phrase "with this faith" three times, and he completes the phrase with two internally consistent metaphors. He says, "with this faith" "we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope;" and "we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony." As King so often does in the speech, the third refrain is completed with still another refrain, which contributes to the unity and rhythm of the speech: he says, "with this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together."

One final metaphor warrants attention because it does not seem to fit the fabric of unity in the speech. Near the beginning of his discussion of the future, the speech takes a turn that overtly reflects a consciousness of segments of the audience: King says, "But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads to the Palace of Justice." Hariman (1989) suggested that King's reference to "my people" was a deliberate departure from the preceding "first 29 paragraphs of the speech . . . addressed to the national (and so largely white) audience" (p. 213). Both Hariman and Cox (1989) noted that this section of the speech is addressed to the "recognized . . . tension in the civil rights

movement that had threatened to spill into the March itself" (Cox, 1989, p. 196).

The reference to a "warm" threshold in the sentence is consistent with the previous use of light/dark metaphors, but at first glance the image of a "warm threshold" seems strained. Why is the threshold portrayed as "warm"? The first adjectives that come to mind to describe a threshold are material ones--a wood or a metal threshold, for example. But King is describing the future here and is expressing a hopeful image of a bright future. Thus, the threshold's material is "warm" because it represents the entrance to a "palace" that promises "justice." And the justice metaphor continues with the next sentence: "In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds."

Transitions

There seems little that is spectacular about most of King's transitions. They are generally brief and unobtrusive, and these seem appropriate qualities for transitions.

King began the first section of the speech, the past, with a reference to his standing in front of the monument to Lincoln who signed the Emancipation Proclamation. His transition to the bad check metaphor, just one and one-half minutes later, is a simple but adequate one: "And so we come here [to the monument] today to dramatize a shameful condition" that is a violation of the promise of the Proclamation. The referent for the word

"dramatize" is probably the march on Washington, but intensive study of the speech might even make one wonder if the word "dramatize" also functions as a preview of the forthcoming use of the bad check metaphor, which is also notably dramatic.

King's transition from the bad check metaphor to the next section, the present, refocuses attention on the opening of the first section: "We have also come to this hallowed spot [of Lincoln's monument] to remind [a reference to the past] America of the fierce urgency of now [the present]."

The section of the speech that emphasizes the present is completed with a transition that is, again, brief and unobtrusive. The next section of the speech deals with the future, and King says, "Nineteen sixty three [the present] is not an end, but a beginning [of the future]."

Lastly, the transition to the dream sequence was discussed much earlier in this treatment of the speech. Curiosity about the matter of the spontaneity of the dream section was raised with regard to the the transition's seeming excessive simplicity and its awkwardness. King says, "I say to you **today** my friends so even though we face the difficulties of **today** and tomorrow I still have a dream." On the other hand, the use of "today and tomorrow" is consistent with the speech's organizational pattern, which emphasized the theme of forward movement in time.

The Rhythm of King's Delivery

The excellence of King's speech seems principally due to his word usage. His delivery of the verbal message seems vocally unremarkable during much of the speech. But the treatment above has also indicated the rhythmic nature of his presentation. Part of this rhythm is due to his use of verbal rhetorical tactics, which some would refer to as stylistic devices. However, to refer to these as stylistic devices might suggest that they are simply, and perhaps separately, mere embellishments of a verbal message; this conception is not appropriate. As demonstrated in this treatment, the tactics are intimately tied to the canons of invention and arrangement as they are simply stylistic. In any case, one cannot deny that the vocal delivery of the message also plays a role in the impact of the speech. Reference has already been made to the manner in which his rising and falling vocal intonation invites the overt participation of the audience, and there are times that King's vocal delivery of the speech is striking. These vocal utterances might be best left to the auditor/viewer to judge. Inevitably, however, the vocal impact is combined with striking verbal images or other verbal tactics. Many of the images and tactics in the speech have already been addressed in the above treatment, but a few additional instances might be mentioned.

One instance is just prior to the bad check metaphor, which is the first use of refrain by King as a unifying, rhythmic device. In this section the phrases "one hundred years later"

and "the Negro" are used four times. Within this refrain is the notable use of antithesis: the Emancipation Proclamation "came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity;" "the Negro lives on a lonely island . . . in the midst of a vast ocean;" and "the Negro . . . finds himself an exile in his own land."

A second instance is just after the bad check metaphor, where refrain appears again. King is just beginning his discussion of the present, and the "fierce urgency of now" is the theme. He begins by emphasizing that "this is no time" to relax. He thus overtly develops the association of "now" and "time," and he emphasizes the association with refrain, again four times, of the phrase "now is the time." This is the section that successfully brought the overt audience response participation, discussed earlier, as noted by Coretta Scott King (Cox, 1989, p. 194).

A third instance is attached to a segment alluded to several times in the above treatment. King is dealing with the future, just prior to his "let freedom ring" segment, and he is using the refrain of "with this faith." Within this segment is the segment using the refrain of "together," which he concludes with the use of the word "day." Verbally, King simply says, "And this will be the day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning. . . ." But it is with his vocal delivery as much as with his verbal phrasing that he is able to

artfully lead into a passionate citing of the anthem, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." Kruh (1988a, p. F8) reported that citing song lyrics is a tradition of the black pulpit, according to Keith Miller, "who has written extensively on King's language" (Kruh, 1988a, p. F1), and this is not the last time that King employed the technique.

King ends the speech with a vocal intensity that has achieved its final crescendo, and verbally he confirms that the speech is associated with a black Baptist sermon. He summons "the old Negro Spiritual: free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty that we are free at last." And even this ending is a rhetorically artistic achievement, (all the greater if it were spontaneous as suggested earlier), for he has just previously embraced not only the disparate parts of the geographical United States with the "let freedom ring" segment, but its people, as well, by envisioning "all of God's children: black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics" "join[ing] hands" (note the horizontal scale, which was a part of the master metaphor of confinement/movement).

Conclusion

This treatment has sought to use King's "Dream" speech as a useful pedagogical case study. It has first highlighted in detail some of the principles of criticism for the novice student. Second, it has offered a microscopic, intrinsic criticism of the speech. The treatment is not a exhaustive one,

as much more may be said about the elements intrinsic and extrinsic to King's speech. However, the treatment has exposed the dynamics of some elements of the speech, which may not have been apparent to the critic without the use of an orality-based text.

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NOTES

[1] Note that Hart (1989) maintained that "it is somewhat barbarous to dissect . . . King's lyrical [emphasis added] style. . . ." (p. 221).

[2] Similarly, Cox (1989) noted King's ability to blend biblical references with the civic tradition of American culture" (p. 191), and Lucaites and Condit (1990, p. 16) made a similar suggestion. Keith and Whittenberger-Keith (1988/89) argued that there are differences between a Black sermon and the King speech (p. 121).

[3] Kruh (1988a, p. 8F) suggested that the refrain, here and elsewhere, is a musical melodic "leitmotif."

[4] The videotape used for this study was Martin Luther King Commemorative Collection: The Speeches of Martin Luther King. (1988). Idanha Films (Producer), E. C. Grace & Associates (Distributors). At least one other videotape is available: Great Speeches for Criticism & Analysis. Greenwood, IN: The Educational Video Group.

[5] Branch (1988) maintained that the transition was spontaneously developed and replaced the "lamest and most pretentious section" of the planned speech: "And so today, let us go back to our communities as members of the international association for the advancement of creative dissatisfaction" (p. 882).

[6] Intrinsic and extrinsic criticism were also discussed by Lucas (1981).

[7] Also, Hart (1989) noted that the speech suggested "ascendent movement" (p. 223).

[8] King's use of imagery in some portions of this section, dealing with the future, is so powerful that some might consider it inelegant. For example, Hart asserted that "some of King's metaphors are almost offensive in their roughness" (p. 222), and two of Hart's three examples of this roughness are drawn from this section, while the third is from the dream section that follows immediately. However, perhaps King's rhetorical decisions can be explained by his attempts to address different segments of the audience. For example, Hart suggested that "perhaps King reasoned that . . . more urbane language would have made him seem effete in the eyes of the underprivileged and a potential object of manipulation in the eyes of the overprivileged" (p. 223).

[9] One of the intervening sentences simply introduces a new metaphor for no apparent reason, albeit an internally consistent one relating to consumption. King said, "Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred."

[10] This last sentence is completed with the use of antithesis, which provides emphasis on King's well-known non-

violent philosophy: "of meeting physical force with soul force." This is an allusion to Mohandas Gandhi's "truth-love force," according to Cox (1989, p. 196) and Kruh (1988a, p. F8).

[11] The concluding phase here, placed in quotation marks by Alvarez's transcript, was a biblical citation (Kruh, 1988a, p. F1), and its poetic nature is just one instance of King's intensified imagery, which permeates the speech to a greater degree. It is almost as though both King, in the speech, and the march are now less preoccupied with rising on the vertical metaphor scale and are now, instead, occupied with motion on the forward/backward scale. Other instances of intensified imagery are evident in this section and are supplemented by at least a few others, such as "the unspeakable horror of police brutality" and "children . . . robbed of their dignity." More instances follow.

[12] Cox (1989) maintained that this portion of the speech is a return "to the voice of the wilderness prophets" (p. 198).

[13] Cox (1989) referred to this section as a "denouement" (p. 200) that is based on a biblical reference.

[14] While King's passion is unleashed in this portion of the speech, his stable vision is not absent. Patton (1987) maintained that

> it is by no means accidental that King chose to cast children as the vehicles and benefactors of the dream. This

> gave increased moral intensity [emphasis added] to the [dream] phrase because the welfare of future generations is a typically powerful source for current sacrifice and dedication (p. 269).

Further, Zarefsky (1987) noted that "the concrete embodiments of the dream are easily visualized and hence. . . . a real[istic] possibility [emphasis added]."